This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 28 (*Canceled*).

29. (*Currently Amended*) A method of preparing an oligonucleotide, comprising:

providing a support-bound nucleotide comprising a 5'-hydroxyl group;

coupling an additional nucleoside to said support-bound nucleotide, said additional nucleotide comprising a 5'-hydroxy protecting group and a 3'-functional group capable of linking to said 5'-hydroxyl group; ~~and~~

selecting dichloroacetic acid having a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 15ppm; and

removing said 5'-hydroxy protecting group in the presence of **said** dichloroacetic acid ~~having a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 15 ppm~~.

30. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 29, wherein said dichloroacetic acid has a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 10ppm.

31. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 29, wherein said dichloroacetic acid has a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 5 ppm.

32. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 29, wherein said dichloroacetic has a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 1 ppm.

33. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 29, further comprising taking a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum of said dichloroacetic acid and integrating a nuclear magnetic resonance peak associated with a CH proton of chloral hydrate.

34. (*Currently Amended*) A method of removing a 5'-hydroxyl protecting group during an oligonucleotide synthesis, comprising:

selecting dichloroacetic acid having a chloral hydrate concentration of less than 15ppm; and

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contacting a 5'-hydroxyl protecting group of an oligonucleotide with said dichloroacetic acid.

35. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 34, further comprising determining whether a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum of said dichloroacetic acid includes a nuclear magnetic resonance peak associated with a CH proton of chloral hydrate.

36. (*Previously Amended*) A method comprising:

testing dichloroacetic acid for the presence of chloral hydrate;

determining the chloral hydrate concentration in said dichloroacetic acid is less than 15 ppm; and

contacting a 5'-hydroxy protecting group of an oligonucleotide with said dichloroacetic acid under conditions effective to remove said protecting group.

37. (*Previously Amended*) The method of claim 36, further comprising

coupling a nucleoside to said 5'-hydroxy protecting group, said nucleotide comprising a 3'-functional group capable of linking to said 5'-hydroxyl group.

Claims 38-45 (*Canceled*)

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